

How does the water get to my house?

The South Bend Water Works maintains 32 deep wells and over 545 miles of water main to deliver the best quality and the proper quantity of water to your house 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The network of water main used to distribute water to our customers is called a distribution system. There is a water main in the street that serves water to your neighborhood. Each residence has a smaller pipe called, a service line, that supplies its water.

What do I need to start service at my residence?

A new customer must come to our customer service office located at 125 West Colfax Avenue. Our customer service office can begin utility service for water, sewer, and trash only. To start service with the South Bend utilities you will need to bring:

1. A copy of your signed lease agreement or a written statement from the landlord indicating that you can start utility service at the desired address.
2. State or federally issued photo identification
3. \$40 for a utility deposit

What should I do if my water is an unusual color?

Rusty, yellow, or orange colored water is caused by iron and manganese sediment that can be deposited in water mains. This sediment can get agitated when water mains are flushed, fire hydrants are used, or when water mains leak. Water mains must be flushed as a part of the proper operation and maintenance of a distribution system. This discolored water is safe to drink, but it is not aesthetically pleasing and can stain clothes.

Discolored water can be remedied if the household plumbing is flushed. Three cold water faucets need to be opened at the same time for 7 minutes to remove any discolored water from the household plumbing. This is referred to as a 3 X 7 system flush. Discolored water is hard to remove from a hot water tank. A cold water faucet in the basement, one in the kitchen, and one in a bathtub or shower is preferred. If the problem persists, alert our customer service office. Do not open any hot water faucets until the cold water has cleared up.

Please Note - Do not do laundry if the water is discolored because it will stain the laundry. In the event that your clothes are stained, a stain removing agent is available at our customer service office. The

first bottle is free, and each additional bottle costs \$3.50. Please use the stain removing agent as directed.

Why does my water smell/taste strange?

Water may have an undesirable taste or smell if it has been stagnant in household plumbing too long. A 3 X 7 flush should alleviate the taste and odor issues. Should the undesirable properties persist, decide if a particular faucet is at fault. Sometimes point of use equipment, water softeners, water heaters, or in-line filters, can be the cause of strange tastes or smells. The quality of our water is constantly monitored and tested, but individual water quality tests can be scheduled by contacting our customer service office at 574-235-9670.

What should I do if I have sand in my water?

Sand-like particles could be calcium (lime) deposits, water softener resin, or sand from a geologic formation. A small sample of the particles should be soaked in vinegar or a mild acid. If the particles dissolve when the acid is added, they are calcium deposits. Sand or water softener resin will not react to the acid. Water softener resin appears as symmetrical and shiny particles that feel greasy to the touch. If the particles are determined to be water softener resin, then the water softener should be bypassed. If there is a significant decrease in pressure or quantity of water, there is a possibility that the particles are coming from our water mains. Please contact our customer service office immediately. A series of 3 X 7 system flushes will remove any particles from your household plumbing. However, flush each cold water faucet and have your water heater checked for calcium deposits.

If there are any further questions or the source of the problems cannot be determined, please contact our customer service office. Water Works personnel may be able to correctly identify the particles.

When I make coffee or tea, why is there scum floating on top?

Due to South Bend Water Works groundwater supply, our water is especially hard. Sometimes the minerals in the water will form a scum-like deposit when they are combined with the natural oils and other ingredients in the coffee bean or tea leaf. This substance, composed of natural oils and minerals, is harmless.

To alleviate future coffee or tea mishaps, you may opt to use softened water or non-bleached coffee filters(see additional note on softened

water under "white flakes" information below).

Is it normal to have white flakes in ice cubes or hot water?

Flakes are caused by calcium carbonate and magnesium carbonate precipitates. When hard water is frozen or boiled, the carbonates in the water come out of solution, appearing as whitish flakes and attaching to containers. This calcium is the same as that in dairy products and is harmless.

Soft water does not have any calcium or magnesium carbonate deposits, but the use of soft water is not recommended.

Why does my water look milky?

Air bubbles entrained in water cause it to look foamy or milky, but it will clear from the bottom. Faucets with aerators introduce air into the water stream to prevent splashing and provide stream uniformity.

Sometimes the aerator can become obstructed and it must be cleaned. Removing the aerator will reduce or eliminate the bubbles, although it would be better to clean the aerator periodically and continue its use. If the problem persists, alert our Customer Service office and we will try to flush the air out of the water mains.

Is lead a problem in our water supply?

No! In South Bend, a majority of the customer owned pipes and service lines are made of lead. Fortunately, the harder water in this area creates a calcium carbonate coating in the service lines. This buildup, known as scaling, is essentially a barrier preventing lead from leaching into the water. Also, the South Bend Water Works is in complete compliance with the strict regulations of the EPA's mandated lead and copper rule. Our water has been given the highest quality lead and copper rating.

Would it be safer if I bought a water filter or bottled water for my home?

A home filter or bottled water may not be necessary since the South Bend Water Works has already filtered and treated the water. As a municipal drinking water supplier, we are heavily regulated by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management and the Environmental Protection Agency. We are in complete compliance with the strict standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Some people desire higher quality water than we can economically provide,

therefore, after-market filters and bottled water are an option.

SOME PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES:

Find out if lead has been used in your plumbing (i.e. pipes, solder, or flux). If lead has not been used, you have little to worry about. If lead is present in your plumbing, follow the next steps.

1) Use only hard cold water for drinking, cooking, and preparing baby formula.

2) Before each use, make sure to run the water until it is as cold as possible. This will ensure that water is coming from the distribution main and not from water which was in contact with lead for a prolonged period.

3) If you believe that you are at extreme risk or someone in your home is pregnant, have your water tested.

The South Bend Water Works is currently on a three year lead and copper compliance schedule. The EPA requires that we take lead and copper samples in our customers' homes every three years. The three year compliance schedule is possible because the South Bend Water Works has a history of low lead and copper concentrations in our residential samples. We are always looking for customers to add to our potential residential sampling point list. All of our lead and copper sampling points are carefully screened to avoid point-of-use (water softeners and other home water treatment systems) treatment systems.

What should I do to report water coming up to the surface near my house?

Please call our operations center at 235.9464 to report water coming up to the surface. There are a variety of reasons water could be coming up to the surface. One of these possibilities is a water leak. Please call us at 235.9464, so we can determine if the problem is a South Bend Water Works problem.